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Welcome aboard

Papua New Guinea has a rapidly evolving art world covering a spectrum from wholly traditional to an imaginative, sometimes fantastic, blend of art which vividly expresses the impact the so-called 'developed world' is having upon our society.

At the heart of this revolution is the National Arts School at Waigani in Port Moresby. Arts School students' work appeared in our last issue of *Paradise* and in this issue, on page 16, first year student Marlon Kuelinad from Madang has done the illustration for the Morobe legend about the dog and the wallaby. (This legend is one of a collection by Colin De'Ath and Mary R. Mennis.) In another move to assist the Arts School, graphics students are now spending time in Air Niugini's art department to enable them to get practical experience in handling commercial assignments.

From time to time the National Arts School has exhibitions both of its own students' and other artists' work. If you are spending time in Port Moresby why not give the school a call — it may have something well worth seeing.

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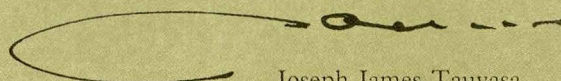
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Joseph James Tauvasa
General Manager



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It's the world's biggest, its diet comprises only one kind of leaf — and its existence is threatened



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A lady from Milne Bay Province who has been in the vanguard of Papua New Guinean women's rights for 50 years



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Voyaging in strange oceans was not much fun in days gone by but the privilege of putting names on the map was some compensation



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You would barely recognise some of them as airstrips but to thousands of Papua New Guinean Highlanders they are their lifelines to the outside world

Cover: Chris Prior of Keravat captures the beauty of the birdwing butterfly *Ornithoptera priamus*, a common relative of the endangered biggest butterfly in the world, *Ornithoptera alexandrae*



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A rare jewel is born . . . only a few moments old, this female *Ornithoptera alexandrae* has the vital role of perpetuating the species in her three or four months of life



The biggest butterfly in the world, Ornithoptera alexandrae, found only in the Popondetta region of Papua New Guinea's Oro (Northern) Province, is in grave danger. Michael Parsons goes in search of this most beautiful of birdwing butterflies.

Giant among butterflies

ONLY tracts of rainforest and the thousands of hectares of regimented rows of oil palm showed green from the air as we came in to land at Girua, Popondetta's out-of-town airstrip. The patchwork of *kunai* grass fields that dissects the plain beneath the rugged peaks of Lamington, the volcano mountain, were yellow — or black where fire had left its mark. Popondetta was experiencing a dry spell.

I was returning to continue my research into the conserva-

tion of *Ornithoptera alexandrae*, my main task this time being to map its distribution within an area of the Popondetta plain where logging had been proposed.

For a long time it had been known that *alexandrae* occurs nowhere in the world except the Popondetta region and it was for this reason in 1966 that the butterfly was placed on the list of the Fauna Protection Ordinance by the then Australian colonial administration. It is now among Papua New

Guinea's protected national animals.

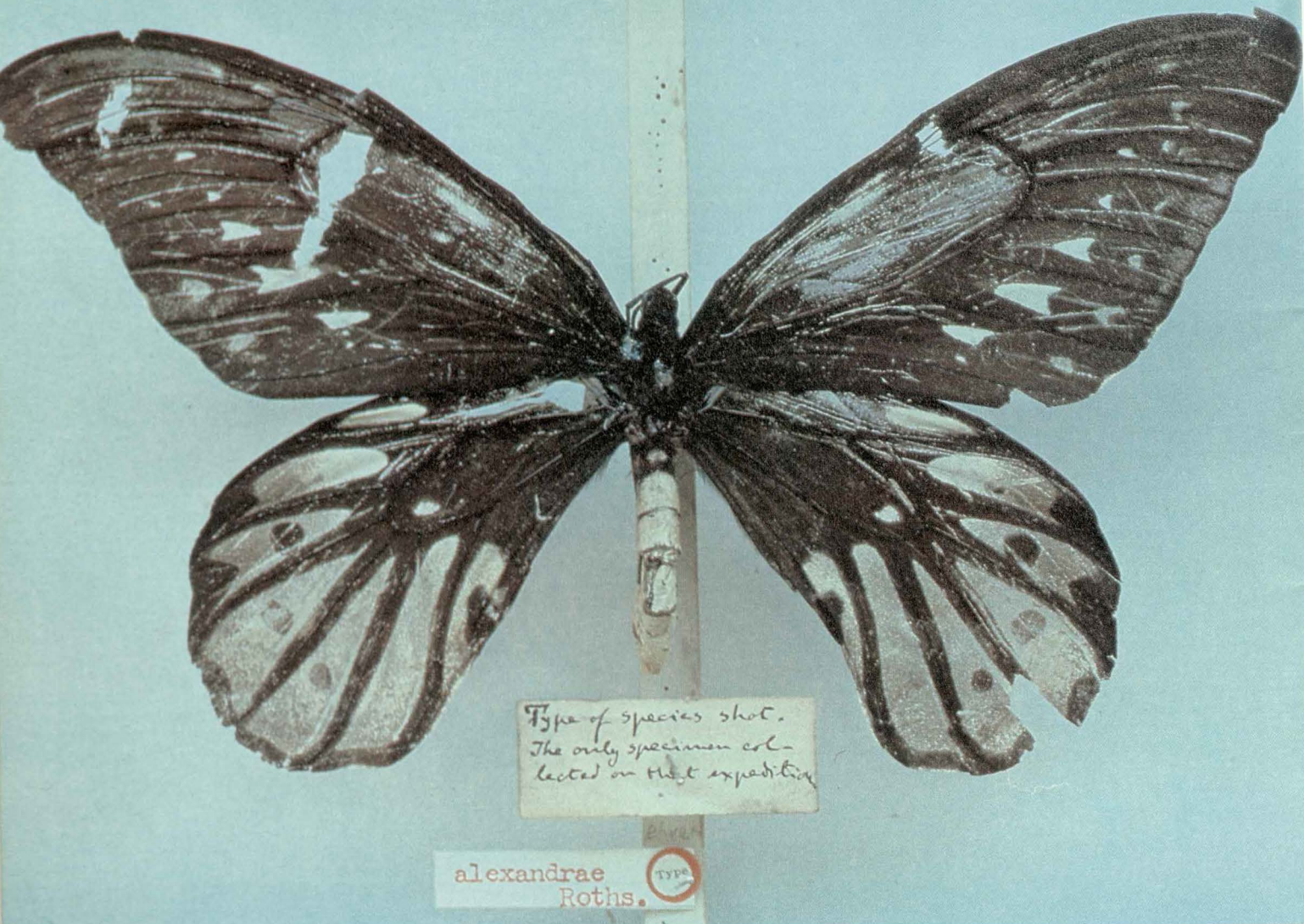
My previous surveys and studies of its numbers in relation to its common and widespread cousin *Ornithoptera priamus*, had convinced me that the decision to protect it was a good one because, even in the Popondetta area, *alexandrae* had a fragmented distribution.

Entomologists are now seriously concerned for *alexandrae*'s survival because of the rapid development of the oil

palm industry on the fertile volcanic ash soils around Popondetta. Where forest clearance has occurred to make way for oil palms it has meant a serious loss of the butterfly's habitat.

Together with a team from the Wildlife Division of the Office of Environment and Conservation, we set out in search of this giant among all butterflies in an area in which it had not previously been looked for.

My plan was to search



around Sambandoga village where, according to the map and recent aerial photographs, we would find a large area of secondary forest with much taller forest beyond.

As expected, the drive was bumpy and dusty. Every passing vehicle sent up clouds of flour-fine dust which, by the end of the 30 kilometre trip, left my hair feeling well and truly starched.

At Sambandoga we talked to some of the elders before taking on a guide who said he recognised the vine in the photographs I had shown him. The vine is the only known foodplant of *alexandrae*.

As we passed the community school, the Oro flag, which incorporates the province's unique butterfly, waved gently in the morning breeze.

First we walked through well-tended gardens with haphazardly planted sugar cane, sweet corn and taro. Then we moved through older, vine-choked gardens where the

velvet soft leaves of wild passionfruit and convolvulus were draped in thick mats over open ground, concealing logs and hollows alike. We cautiously picked our way through; there was no point in chancing a twisted ankle at the beginning of a day's walking.

We moved in single file, shirt already clinging to my back. Sweat broke more freely as we pressed on and the sun soared higher and hotter. The scrub began to rise around us. Then there were saplings providing shade. Next came primary forest, stirring inside me the sense of awe and wonderment which grips me every time I enter this type of vegetation. Trees rise sheer, some to more than 40 metres. It is like walking in a nature-made cathedral. Huge, thin triangular flanges of buttress roots rise to above head-height. Contorted root-stems of the giant strangling fig stand in a towering tangle.

The air hung heavy with

moisture and the musty-sweet scent of decaying vegetation. It was noticeably cooler under cover of the forest. There was very little underfoot except where one of the giants had come crashing to the ground and new seedlings had competed with each other to occupy the shaft of light which now illuminated the rich leafy humus layer of forest floor.

Here and there, across the leaf litter, giant black and yellow millipedes march slowly, deliberately, in search of a meal. The empty shells of large land snails are strewn about. But there are few other signs of animal life near the ground.

In this half-lit world, the main throb of life is to be found about 30 metres up in the upper canopy among countless interwoven leaves and epiphytes. We could hear but rarely catch sight of many birds. The harsh piercing cackles of parakeets. The occasional 'coo' of a pigeon. Add to this the sudden cacophany of

the cicadas and it is a noisy cathedral.

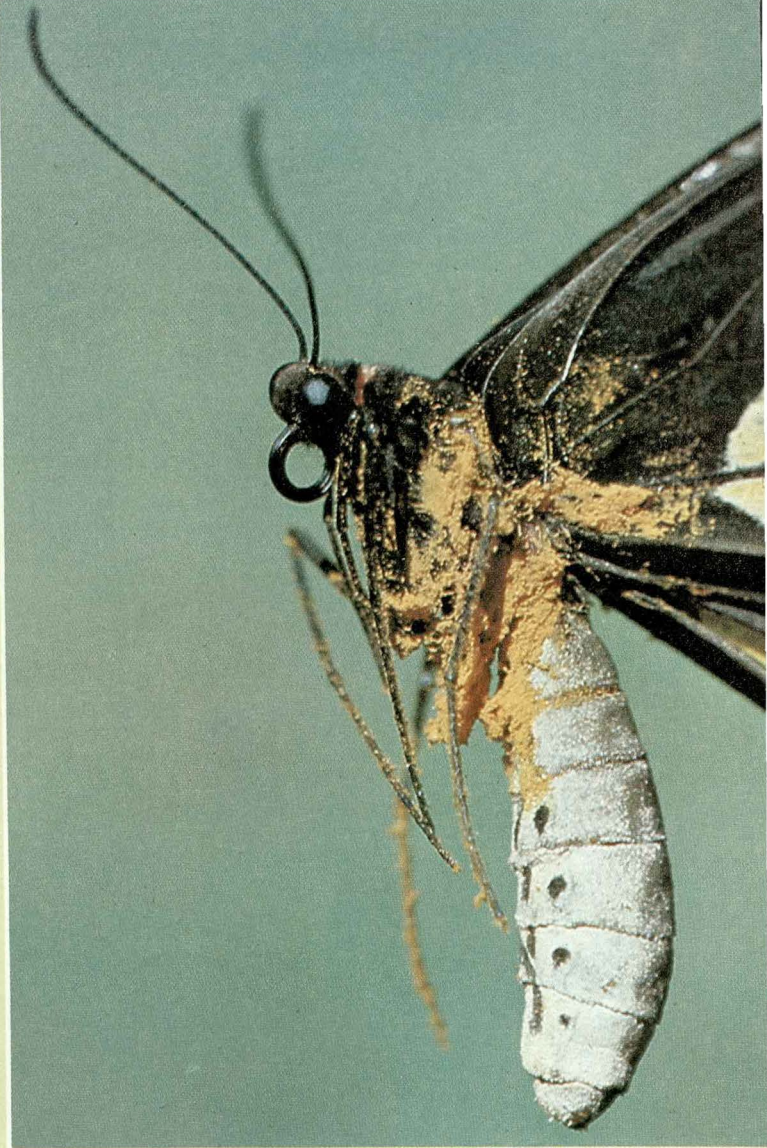
Deciding it was time we left the beaten track to look for *alexandrae*'s favourite vine, we followed our guide as he deftly sliced his way through the foliage. Soon we were looking at the pendulous, six-sided green fruits of *Aristolochia schlechteri* dangling from segmented stalks at intervals up the thick, corky stem of the vine which heads straight up, using a tree trunk as a guide.

We collected the fruit which was nearly ripe. Then we spread out but within shouting distance of each other. It was clear they were common in the area. Some had clusters of beautiful maroon red three-petalled flowers with tubular, yellow throats and a felt-like covering of hairs.

Within half an hour we had two bags brimming with fruit, the seeds of which would be used to propagate thousands of vines for planting out in reserve areas. But we had



Left: A blast from a shot-gun by pioneer collector Alfred Meek in 1906 brought this female alexandrae to earth; below: alexandrae larva; bottom: pupa; right: another birdwing, *Troides oblongomaculatus*, smothered in hibiscus pollen



found no caterpillars of *alexandrae* because the leaves of the vine in this tall forest were well out of sight in the canopy.

We returned to the main track and walked on a few hundred metres until coming to a large *kunai* field. It was another 10 sticky minutes in the noonday sun before we reached the village on the other side of the field.

We were welcomed, led to the cool of an open-sided rest hut with a raised floor and served freshly opened green coconuts.

Thanking our hosts, we moved on, again through old garden areas and then fairly open, advanced secondary forest where thin saplings rise to about 12 metres. It looked an ideal habitat for *alexandrae*. We found *Aristolochia schlechteri* sprawling on the saplings in profusion, each vine sending out vegetative shoots which crept through dry leaf litter and climbed over other trees nearby.

Now at last the large, tough ovate leaves could be observed more closely. On the third vine I studied I found a young caterpillar happily munching a characteristic u-shape from the tip of a soft, pale-yellow young leaf high up amongst the foliage. Disappointingly, the young muncher was only the offspring of the common non-protected *Ornithoptera priamus*. Further search found only *priamus* caterpillars and a few empty pupal cases.

Then we came to a very large vine showing plenty of evidence of birdwing damage. As I moved in to study it more closely, one of our party pointed excitedly to a large fern in the shadows a little distance away. There, in all the resplendent glory of her new livery, a freshly-emerged female *Ornithoptera alexandrae* clung to the now empty pupa, drying her huge, chocolate wings.

She had probably hatched late that morning. It would on-



Left: *Ornithoptera priamus* mating;
bottom: *Aristolochia schlechteri*
cuttings, alexandrae's only
food plant, is propagated
in nursery conditions

growing dark by the time we got back to the vehicle. We had found only one *Ornithoptera alexandrae* that day. But on subsequent days we found several caterpillars and watched the spectacular flight of adults as they soared large and birdlike high above the forest canopy.

The future of the world's largest butterfly remains uncertain but work is going apace to establish new habitat with cuttings of *Aristolochia schlechteri*. Some of these areas are actually blocks of land which have been rejected for oil palm planting. Still wooded, and being government-owned land, they will remain reserves for all time.

Other land is being designated wildlife management areas, having been set aside specifically to conserve and study alexandrae at the request of traditional owners, people who realise that the butterfly is an important heritage of the people of Papua New Guinea which must be preserved for generations to come. — *Michael Parsons works with the Insect Farming and Trading Agency of the Division of Wildlife at Bulolo in Morobe Province.*



ly be a matter of time before she would take to the air with strong beats of her great wings. Everyone stood silent while I photographed the event.

Alexandrae was startled by the first flash but then remained still while I took further shots. This marvellous, pristine specimen confirmed to us that the assessment of the species as having an average 25-centimetre wingspan was no exaggeration.

As we left her in peace, I hoped her role, so vital to the continuation of the species, would be a successful one in the two to three months of her life.

Leg muscles were beginning to complain and it was

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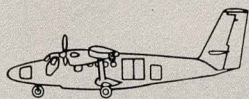
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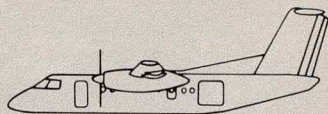


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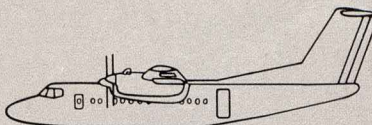
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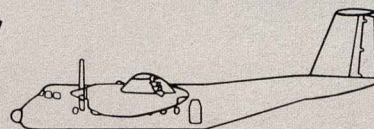
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Left: Alice Wedega, MBE; **below left:** as a girl of 16 at Kwato; **below right:** Alice (standing) with fellow Kwato missionaries, Panai Loea and Nora

ALICE WEDEGA

Alice Wedega, in her seventy-seventh year, now lives quietly in suburban Port Moresby. But inside her frail frame the light which made her a giant among women still burns brightly. Eric Johns — a schoolteacher in Papua New Guinea for 13 years until 1973 — traces the story of Alice Wedega, missionary, teacher, expeditionary, nurse, internationalist, welfare worker, moral rearmament activist and politician.



ALICE, second eldest of four brothers and three sisters, was born at Alo Alo village, Milne Bay Province, in 1905. Her father, Wedega Gamahari, was a London Missionary Society pastor before resigning to become a copra farmer. Her whole family was solidly Christian.

When she was six, Alice was sent to Kwato, an island in the China Straits off the south-eastern end of New Guinea, where LMS missionaries had set up a station in 1891. Alice's first task was to help mind the babies of her Aunt Bessie. She stayed on at Kwato to complete Standard Six schooling and then undertake a course in domestic studies under the instruction of the wife of Charles Abel, one of the founders of the Kwato mission. For three years she studied sewing, cooking and craft.

It was not long before the taught became teacher. In 1932, when Alice was involved in the training of young girls, she had her horizons momentarily broadened when she was taken on a three-month holiday in Australia by the wife of the manager of Burns Philp's operations on Samarai, an island three kilometres from Kwato.

In 1935 Alice Wedega began her first field work as a missionary. She was a member of a party of 15 Kwato people — including another woman, Panai Loea, and Cecil Abel (Charles's son) — which went to the Cloudy Bay area near Abau. Two tribes, the Dorewaide and the Keveli, were fighting each other so often their numbers were diminishing. Patrol officers were jailing killers but the fighting continued. The Kwato expedition was in response to an official appeal for help.

Against the advice of a patrol officer, the Kwato party went into the troubled area without a police guard. Amau was the first village it visited. Alice remembers that the

villagers, members of the Dorewaide tribe, who were enjoying a feast, were taken by surprise but the visitors were able to talk their way into having a house set aside for them to sleep in.

That night the missionaries held a prayer meeting but few villagers attended. However, when the people saw there were no guns or police around, they became more trusting. Alice recalls that the Amau chief, Belea, said his son, Maeau, was away killing someone. But when Maeau returned he was persuaded to join the the Kwato party when it moved on to the next village, Kulondi.

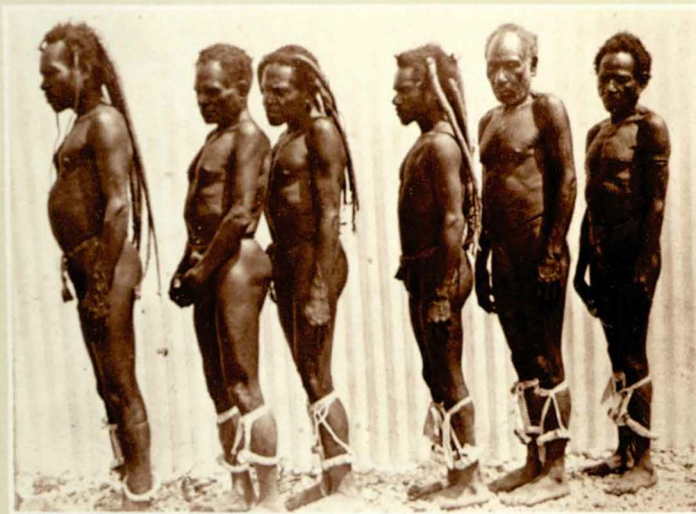
When the party got to Kulondi the villagers ran into the bush. The interpreter called out: 'This is not a patrol. These are missionaries who have come to see you.' Slowly, says Alice, the Kulondi people



re-emerged and finally the party was made welcome. But, as at Amau, they were unable to convince the people that the fighting should stop.

In all, the Kwato party visited five villages. One representative from each village was persuaded to accompany the missionaries back to the coast. There it was discovered that the five were either chiefs or sons of chiefs. They were taken to Kwato where, says Alice, they were quickly converted to Chris-

Right: Alice, 76, at her suburban Port Moresby home; **left from top:** Kwato missionaries in the 1920s; all Keveli men except the Dorewaide man third from left, jailed in the mid-1930s at Abau for killing, enjoyed the food and conditions of jail and were welcomed home as heroes on their release; Alice (centre) and fellow delegates to the New Zealand pan-Pacific conference on the role of women in 1953



tianity. Then they returned to their villages where they were successful in putting an end to the conflict between the Dorewaide and the Keveli.

Even better was to come. One Keveli man who owned a lot of good gardening land on the plains invited both Keveli and Dorewaide to go and live on it. They did so. The Kwato missionaries then built a school and aid post at Amau. Alice, who by this time knew the people well, was asked to take charge of the school.

She remained at Amau until the Pacific War began when all missionary women were taken back to Kwato for their safety. Alice was at Milne Bay when the Japanese came.

All European missionaries (except Cecil Abel who joined the army) went to Australia. Alice remembers watching from Duabo as foreigner fought foreigner in her country. Wounded Australian and American troops were nursed at Duabo and later at Kwato by Alice and other missionaries.

After the war Alice returned to Amau where she taught children English and Police Motu (the lingua franca for much of the Papua region of PNG) by day; Police Motu and Suau (the language of a bible translation) to adults by night.

Her stay at Amau this time was short. In 1946 she return-

ed to Kwato to help establish and develop other schools. By now Alice Wedega was regarded as one of the LMS's key missionaries and, in 1952, along with four other LMS members, was invited to attend a Moral Rearmament Conference in Bombay.

The visit to India had a profound impact on Alice. She says that the great poverty of millions of Indians convinced her that her own people were so much better off. At least they all had gardens.

In 1953 Alice Wedega travelled around the Milne Bay area recounting her experiences. In the same year she went to New Zealand as the sole PNG delegate to a pan-Pacific conference on the role of women.

In those days Australia was the colonial authority in Papua New Guinea and in New Zealand Alice was critical of Australia's failure to provide government schools in her country. She was told by other delegates that their respective colonial administrations were providing schools. On her return to Papua New Guinea she spread the word about schooling in other Pacific countries. At the same time she pointed up the poor living conditions imposed on village women in Papua New Guinea.

Alice Wedega became a





public figure and in 1955 she was asked by Lady Cleland, wife of the then Australian Administrator, Sir Donald Cleland, to train in Port Moresby as a girl guide captain so that she could promote the movement in Milne Bay.

Alice studied for three months at the Guide House in Konedobu, a Port Moresby suburb, and then, after passing her final test, returned to Milne Bay where she was successful in developing the guiding movement.

In 1956 three government trawlers were sent to Milne Bay to take new guides to Port Moresby for a countrywide jamboree. Soon after, Alice was made guide commissioner for Milne Bay.

But her activities were not confined just to guiding. In 1958 Alice was employed by the department of agriculture to help improve gardening in Milne Bay. The department was trying to eradicate 'slash and burn' agriculture. Because women do most of the farming in Milne Bay, Alice was used as the bridge between them and agricultural officers.

In 1960 Alice was involved in the development of a training centre at Ahioma, Milne Bay. As an employee of the welfare department, she taught young women cooking, sewing, hygiene, native crafts and how to run their own clubs. In the first year the centre was attended by 68 students from all over Papua New Guinea. Alice worked at the centre until she retired from missionary work in 1968.

In 1961 Alice was nominated by the Administrator as a member of the last Legislative Council before universal franchise was introduced. A year later she was awarded the MBE in recognition of her contribution to the improvement in the lot of women.

There was to be no rest for Alice on retirement. In 1969 she was sent to Bougainville by

the colonial government to try to help solve the conflict which had developed over the decision to develop the Panguna copper mine.

Alice, as might have been expected, was more concerned about the problems of women in the villages and, after working there for two months in 1969, she returned in 1970 for a further 10 months.

At first, she said, no one on Bougainville would take any notice of her. She was called 'redskin' by the much darker Bougainvillean people. But gradually, she recalls, she won the women over and then their husbands after they had tasted the cooking she had introduced. She taught the women weaving, how to build an oven from a 44-gallon drum and

how to bake bread, buns, scones and other food.

Then Alice was travelling internationally again as a Moral Rearmament activist. She visited about a dozen European countries and lectured in many places on her work as a missionary and the conditions of women in PNG.

Alice Wedega had always resented the subservient role women were expected to play

by their menfolk. She believed they should not be left out of public or private decision-making and should be given greater educational opportunities so that they could contribute to the development of Papua New Guinea. Her aim has always been to see women stand as equals alongside their husbands.

Bob Hawkins writes: Alice Wedega had just had an eye operation when I visited her at her Korobosea home last August. But while her image of

me may not have been so clear, there was nothing uncertain about her view of today's Papua New Guinea. She is sternly critical of the level of debate in the National Parliament in which can be seen many similarities to the Australian system from which it was born. Says Alice: 'When I was in Legco we didn't argue very much. We simply listened, made notes and then went away and thought about it. We made our replies later. Nowadays the politicians get up and argue and argue and argue . . .' Alice still espouses her views with conviction. You will soon be able to read them in her autobiography which she has called *Listen, My Country*. ✨

Alice Wedega, politician, addresses the colonial Legislative Council in 1961, with 'old territorial' and fellow Legco member Ivan Champion looking on



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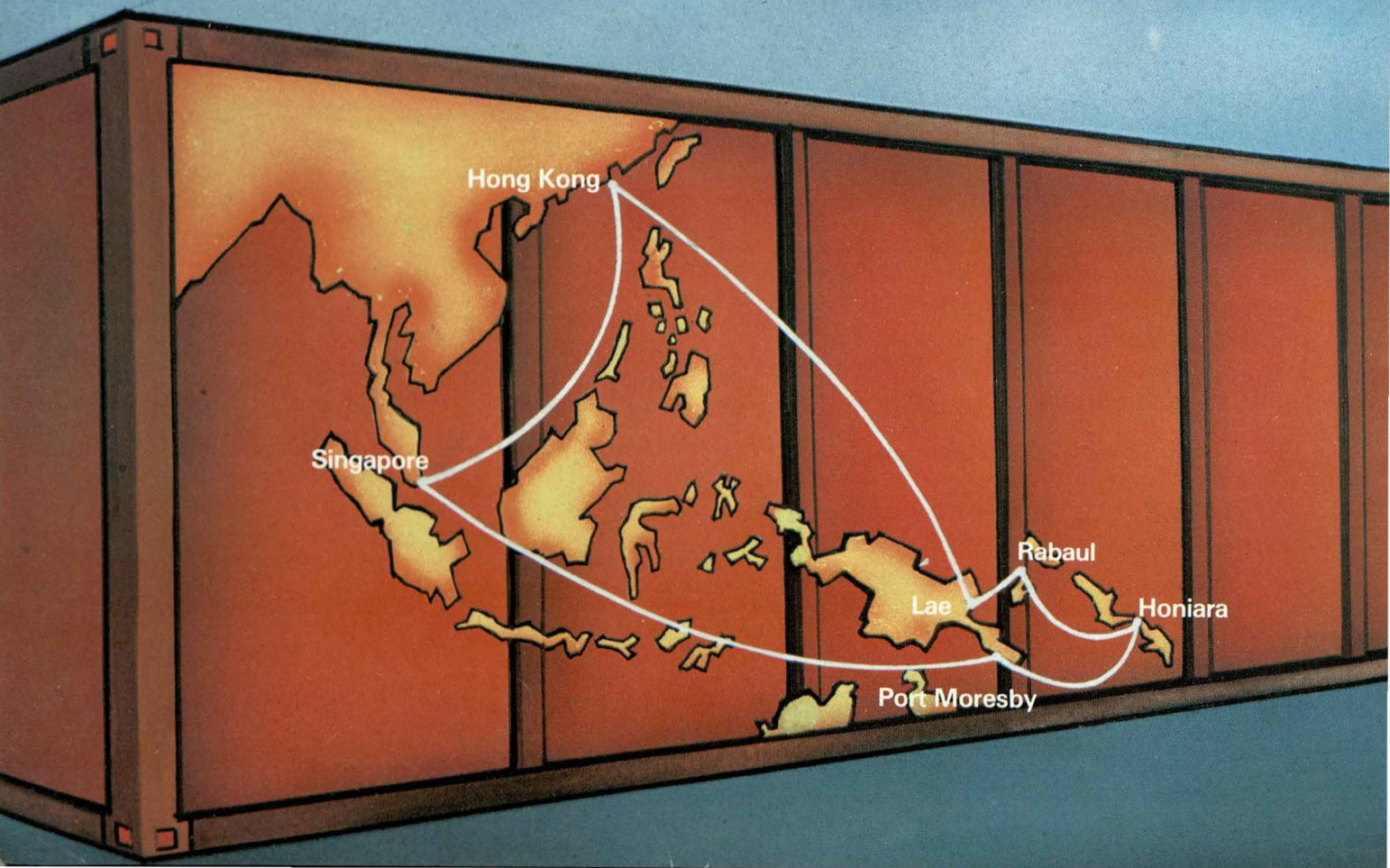
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LEGEND

Why a wallaby walks on two

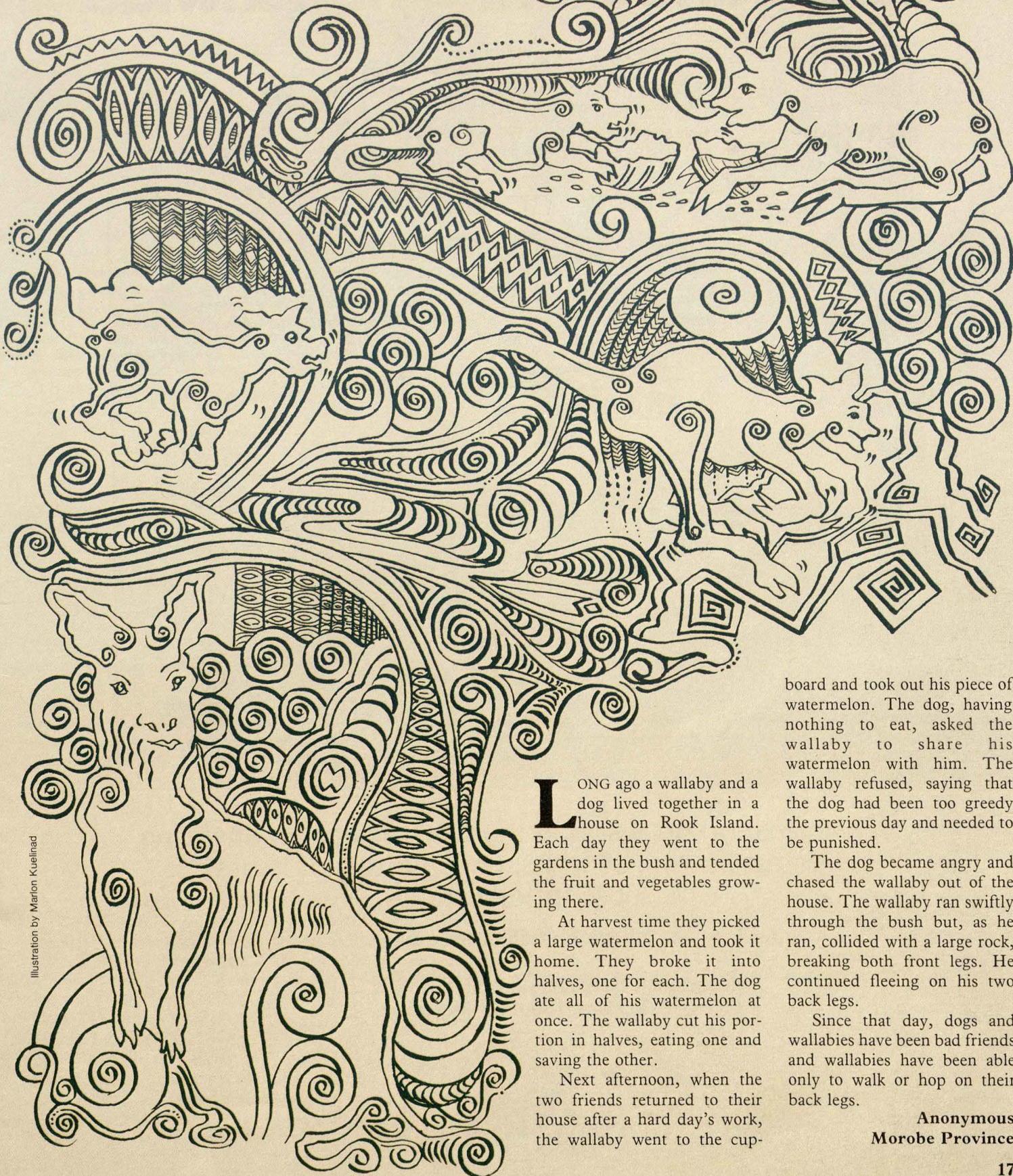


Illustration by Marlon Kuelinad

LONG ago a wallaby and a dog lived together in a house on Rook Island. Each day they went to the gardens in the bush and tended the fruit and vegetables growing there.

At harvest time they picked a large watermelon and took it home. They broke it into halves, one for each. The dog ate all of his watermelon at once. The wallaby cut his portion in halves, eating one and saving the other.

Next afternoon, when the two friends returned to their house after a hard day's work, the wallaby went to the cup-

board and took out his piece of watermelon. The dog, having nothing to eat, asked the wallaby to share his watermelon with him. The wallaby refused, saying that the dog had been too greedy the previous day and needed to be punished.

The dog became angry and chased the wallaby out of the house. The wallaby ran swiftly through the bush but, as he ran, collided with a large rock, breaking both front legs. He continued fleeing on his two back legs.

Since that day, dogs and wallabies have been bad friends and wallabies have been able only to walk or hop on their back legs.

**Anonymous
Morobe Province**

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NO CURE NO PAY

At a quarter-to-midnight, July 4, 1981, the 7550-tonne container vessel Waigani Express slammed into a coral reef, 1500 metres offshore and within sight of the Hood Point lighthouse, 80 kilometres southeast of Port Moresby. It looked a certain write-off. Lynton Diggle describes an amazing salvage exercise.

THE grinding, tearing of metal against reef reverberates through the *Waigani Express*, jolting master Rudhart Kauffman, 43, from his sleep. The vessel he has commanded for 15 months, with its \$8 million cargo, is being pounded, helplessly, by a heavy swell.

In the radio room, Rosa, a husky German blonde, taps out the news of the *Waigani Express's* predicament. Her constant companions, a dog and a parrot, are unusually tense and quiet. Back comes a message from the vessel's owners in Hamburg. The instruction is to throw containers overboard and try to back off the reef. Even to Captain Kauffman, inexperienced in salvage methods, this does not seem quite prudent. The ship's cranes could lift the containers off deck and into the water. But unhooking them would be a major problem given the huge swell breaking along both sides of the vessel.

As the crew checks the lower hold for leaks and damage, the vessel continues to rise and fall. But, for the moment it is holding in one piece.

Well-plugged in to marine messages in the Pacific, two Suva, Fiji-based companies — Marine Pacific and Salvage Pacific — are quick to act. Salvage expert Ian Lockley and an assistant fly to Brisbane. From Brisbane they go on to Cairns where a charter aircraft is waiting to take them across the Coral Sea to Port Moresby.

Already the *Wallacia*,



Pacific Salvage's Port Moresby-based tug, is standing by the *Waigani Express*. Ian Lockley arrives on the scene in a small power boat which comes leaping across the waves from the direction of Port Moresby. In wet suits and diving gear, Lockley and company are quickly in the water and, battling the heaving swell, inspecting the conditions beneath the stranded vessel's hull. They make a photographic record as they move along the keel.

Then, momentarily, the

engine on Lockley's own power boat fails and it begins to drift helplessly toward the reef. Captain Kauffman orders a lifeboat to be lowered but already the *Wallacia* has moved in to tow the power boat to safety.

Preliminary investigations over, Captain Rudhart Kauffman agrees that Salvage Pacific and Marine Pacific should attempt to save the *Waigani Express*. The contract in a situation like this is simple: no cure, no pay: Ian Lockley is committed to spending huge

sums and calling on years of experience and ingenuity even though he knows, should he fail, there will not be a cent in it for him or the two Fiji companies. Salvage work is a high risk game.

Back in the comfort of a Port Moresby hotel, serious planning begins. Seemingly endless international telephone calls are made. From Suva the big tug *Pacific Salvor* is on its way with a team of divers and others skilled in salvage work. Money is raised to finance the operation and naval architect



Allan Calquhoun is asked to fly to Port Moresby.

Papua New Guinean immigration authorities offer close co-operation in processing work permits for a small army of foreigners. Realising the spectacular nature of the operations which lay ahead, Film New Zealand is called in to make a documentary of events.

Allan Calquhoun begins his calculations of how much weight has to be lifted from the *Waigani Express* before it can be refloated. Discussions go into the night, punctuated by more long international calls.

When a figure is arrived at, the next problem is how to get the cargo off. With the sea in its moody frame and a steady southeaster, it is clear any lighter moored alongside would soon be smashed. The closest safe anchorage is in the lagoon behind the reef. It is decided to use helicopters but, because their lifting capacity is limited, it means all cargo must first be unpacked from containers and then placed, piece by piece, into nets.

Port Moresby-based Pacific helicopters are called in. Three Hughes 500s and a Jet Ranger

Above: High, not quite dry, the *Waigani Express* awaits rescue; **right:** a fortune in spilled rice

are brought back from jungle work, and a labour team is flown to the stranded vessel to begin unpacking containers. A makeshift helipad is made from containers.

When the *Pacific Salvor* arrives from Suva, helicopters are shuttling back and forth across the reef. The cargo, in the calm of the lagoon is being placed back into containers for towing to Port Moresby.

What does a cargo boat take to Papua New Guinea? I saw sack after sack of potatoes, bags of rice, tins of corned beef, scented soap for hotel rooms, kerosene in 44-gallon drums, cartons of rum and French champagne. A box slips through a net and plunges into the sea. That's the carton of flea collars which won't be making life more comfortable for Papua New Guinea's cats; instead it becomes the subject of an insurance claim. (The cost of saving the cargo will be added to the freight bills of the *Waigani Express's* owners based on figures computed by a

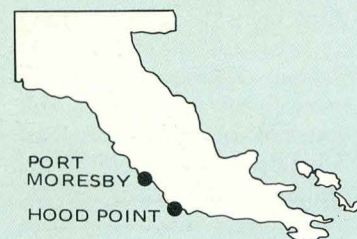


Melbourne-based 'average adjuster' who is now aboard the grounded ship.)

Tremendous goodwill pervades the rescue operation. The representative of the charterer of the *Waigani Express*, Commodore 'Hutch', pitches in with the rest to lend a hand to shift cargo. 'Call me Hardy,' says Captain Kauffman and bends to his work.

One of the dangers of lightening the load of a vessel grinding on a reef is that wave action is likely to increase hull damage. Ian Lockley had an eye to this problem, methodically replacing lost cargo weight with seawater held in rapidly constructed 'swimming pools' from steel plates.

In just a few days the little helicopters move 421 tonnes. A further 350 tonnes, in the form of bunker oil, is pumped over the reef into the holding tanks

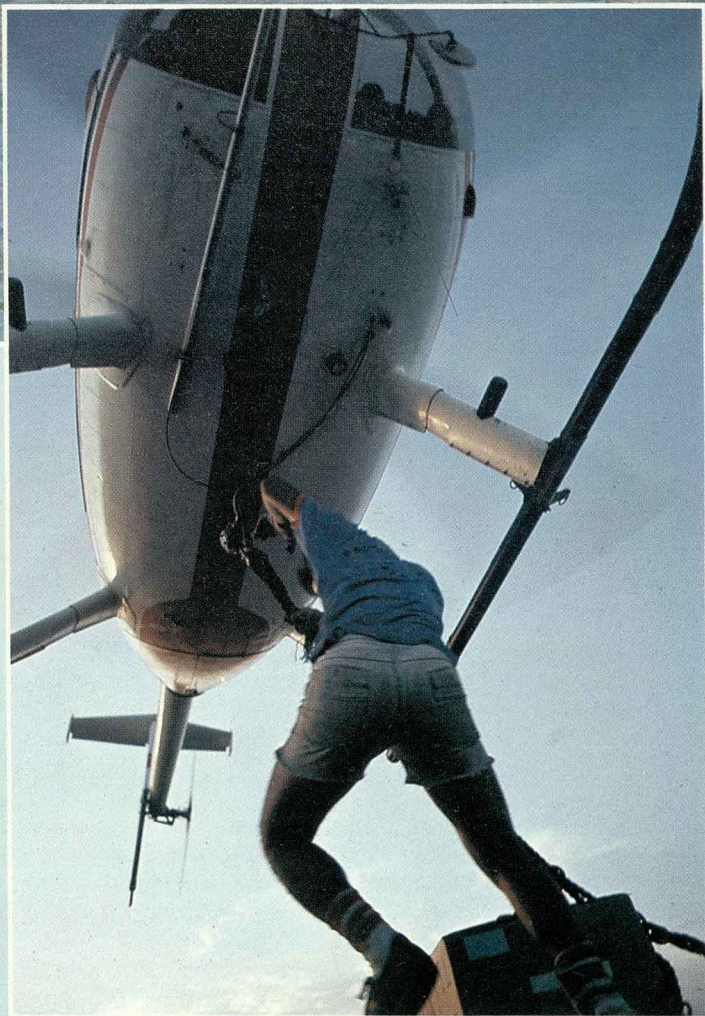


of a barge. Eight hundred tonnes of saltwater swish around in the new tanks.

Preparations are made to lay ground tackle. A complex network of heavy chain and wire hawsers is guided around huge coral heads deep down over the edge of the reef.

Divers have no lighting problems as they work in the crystal depths. Fish life abounds. A two-metre tiger shark, lazily curious, makes a few passes but the work goes on. I am lowered for underwater filming by the *Waigani Express's* 32-tonne crane.

On the shore, people from



From bottom: filling the net . . . hook-up . . . and away

Hula village maintain a daily vigil in much the same way as big city residents watch a hole in the ground. Local anglers don't allow the salvage frenzy to keep them from their fishing. Prayers are offered at the Hula church. One of the worries in everyone's mind is the possibility of an oil spill which would ruin sea life for miles around. On the other hand, a 'spill' of cargo washing up on the beach would make it a time for celebrating.

Days are passing and soon the tide is to reach its highest mark of the year. More cargo has to go before refloating can be attempted. The little 'copters are doing their best but progress is not fast enough. A call goes out to Borneo where a huge 'sky crane' helicopter is logging. How much per hour? How much to re-position it? This time, a combination of logistics and enormous cost makes even the salvage game's big spenders search for another solution.

And then comes a stroke of

luck. The Royal Australian Air Force has Chinook helicopters participating in jungle exercises in Papua New Guinea. Calls to Canberra suggest they might be available. More negotiations and the Chinooks are available for 20 hours — at a price. But cost benefit studies make it feasible and a deal is struck.

Like giant spiders, the Chinooks crab sideways toward the stranded vessel. The aft mast has been lopped off to provide more room for the RAAF aircraft to manoeuvre.

Under full load and torque, a Chinook can generate winds of 160 kph. Decks are cleared and safety lines are rigged for the crews who will slip the hooks hanging from the bellies of the helicopters onto the containers. Applying its 8-tonne lift, a Chinook turns the sea into a maelstrom. 'Operation Chinook' is on.

The ship's cranes play 3-dimensional chess with containers, checking that each load is within the Chinook's lifting capacity and placing it in position for uplift. Never before have helicopters been used in a salvage operation in this manner. The boldness and im-



agination of Salvage Pacific are paying off.

But major problems remain. Three hundred metres of heavy chain are still fouled too deep for divers to reach. A small research submarine is known to be in Australia and arrangements are made to have it flown by a Boeing Jumbo. But then it is found to be out of service. That high tide is getting nearer and winds lifting to more than 30 knots are beginning to pound the *Waigani Express* even more heavily on the reef. Damage to the hull must be kept to a minimum if a good salvage value is to be obtained. Already hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent and the first hint of a huge financial loss begins to niggle at the salvors.

Allan Calquhoun's figures indicate more weight must be

added. The main hold is the last place which can be flooded with sea water, a hold with layer upon layer of closely stacked containers full of valuable cargo.

An anxious call comes from a woman who has just come to Papua New Guinea to live. The family piano, a Campbell, is on the ship and not insured. It is on its way from Auckland and the children are upset at the thought of losing it. No, the piano is in no danger and will soon be on its way to Port Moresby, is the confident assurance.

Heads are put together to protect the 200 tonnes of cargo in the main hold. Packed tightly in the cell guides, the doors to the containers are inaccessible. Someone suggests cutting through the sides of the containers with chisels and man-

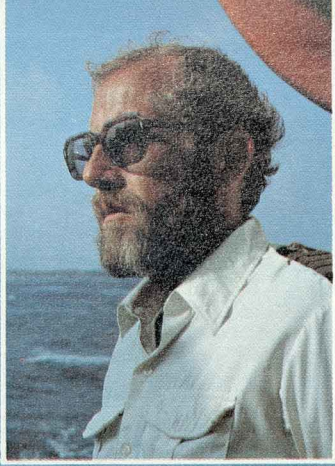
handling with a human chain to bring the cargo up to the 'tween deck just above the flood level. It's a possibility.

Sixty villagers, recruited from Hula, are ferried by helicopter onto the *Waigani Express*. One big fellow, frightened out of his wits at his first experience in a helicopter, gives the pilot a bad time by grabbing him as he lifts his aircraft up out of the coconut palms of Hula.

For most of the Hula people it is the first time they have ever been on such an enormous vessel. Wide-eyed, they gradually make their way down into its bowels. The fortune in

spilled rice and other foods must appear to them as a view of the inside of Fort Knox might appear to a Westerner.

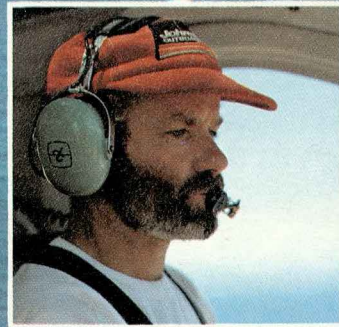
Someone fashions a metre-long tin opener and begins levering away as if opening a can of spaghetti. Hundreds of tonnes are moved — netting labelled *banis bilong pik* (pig fencing), bales of cloth for a jungle station, containers of loose grain for a brewery. Someone remembers motorised auger elevators carried as deck



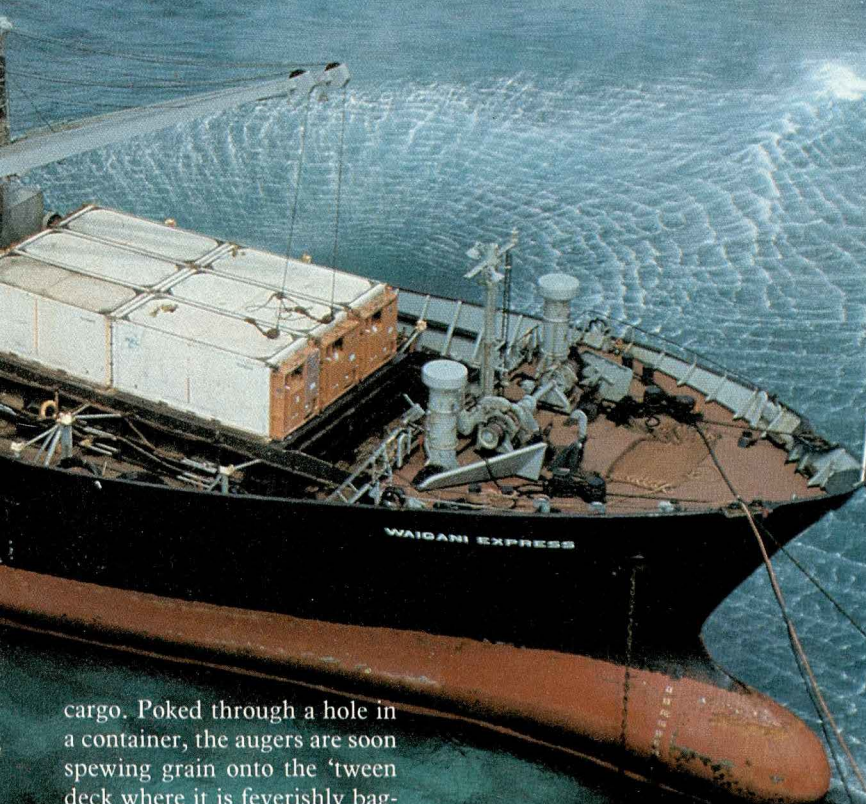
Captain 'call me Hardy'
Rudhart Kauffman



Ian Lockley, master of salvage



Brian Senn, Pacific Helicopter's
senior pilot and, **top**, Alan
Calquhoun, naval architect



cargo. Poked through a hole in a container, the augers are soon spewing grain onto the 'tween deck where it is feverishly bagged and stacked clear of the impending flooding.

Next day in Britain, Charles and Diana are to be wed. But the event is on few minds. The salvors only know that next day is the highest tide of the year. Pumps are started and a whistle warns the workers to get out of the hold. They do not smile until a

warm tropical sun greets them on deck.

The ground tackle problem has not been fully resolved and time is against Pacific Salvage. Instead of laying the tackle from underwater blocks and pulleys up to the tug, it is decided to pull it over the



Free and on her way to Port Moresby, the *Waigani Express* under tow by the *Pacific Salvor*



noon ground tackle is perfect. A line runs through the blocks out to *Wallacia* and another, as thick as a man's wrist, direct to *Pacific Salvor*.

Allan Calquhoun, Ian and Hardy stand quietly at a stern rail — and wait. The last of the water is drained through the scuppers and the ship is light again. It is coming alive. It bounces a little. Ian smiles as a main pulley moves about a centimetre.

'She's going. No it's stopped again.' Hardy's eyes are rivetted to the pulley. Out there in the darkness two tugs, using only a part of their immense power, are riding gently, their crew listening intently to Ian's instructions over the walkie-talkie.

'It's moving again. *Salvor*, ease power by 100 revs. The *Waigani* is moving now. She's moving. She's going, all right. *Waigani*, stop your engines. She's moving off the reef now. She's clear.' His voice shows little of the excitement which must be shuddering inside him.

The cure is happening. The pay will follow. A bottle of champagne cracks on the stern. A cheer goes up as the *Waigani Express* gains speed backwards, slipping out into the darkness and safety of the open sea. — *Lynton Diggle was a member of the Film New Zealand team which recorded the rescue of the Waigani Express.*

vessel's stern and around its huge capstan. Given the 5-1 mechanical advantage of the ground tackle, the 5-tonne pull of the capstan should, theoretically, be sufficient to gently pull the ship of its rocky bed.

The weather has calmed from the 30-knot winds earlier in the week and the tide is due to peak around 8pm. De-ballasting begins in the afternoon with water pouring from the main hold and ballasting tanks. Then the swimming pools are breached, sending a river of sea water rushing to the stern.

The hauling wire is wrap-

ped around the capstan and pressure is gently applied. 'Give me full astern on the main engines please, Hardy,' requests Ian Lockley. It is 8pm and the sea boils astern. The capstan takes the strain. And stops. 'Start the bloody winch,' yells Ian. 'Start it up.' The bo'sun swings the control on — and off — and on — and off. But the capstan won't move. Eight million dollars' worth stays stubbornly on the reef.

The fuse box is red hot as the bi-metal strips controlling the capstan heat to melting point. A cooling fan is blown over the blackened switch-

board but to no avail.

The internal brake on the capstan is somehow jammed on. The high tide is passing and the ideas department is struggling. Pumps are reversed and ballast is pumped back on board. The swimming pools are refilled and a tired crew sleeps through what is left of Charlie's wedding day.

The morning after the night before dawns calm and work begins again in earnest to get ground tackle laid as Ian wants it. The tugs *Pacific Salvor* and *Wallacia* dance astern in the swell, lines pulling this way and that. By after-

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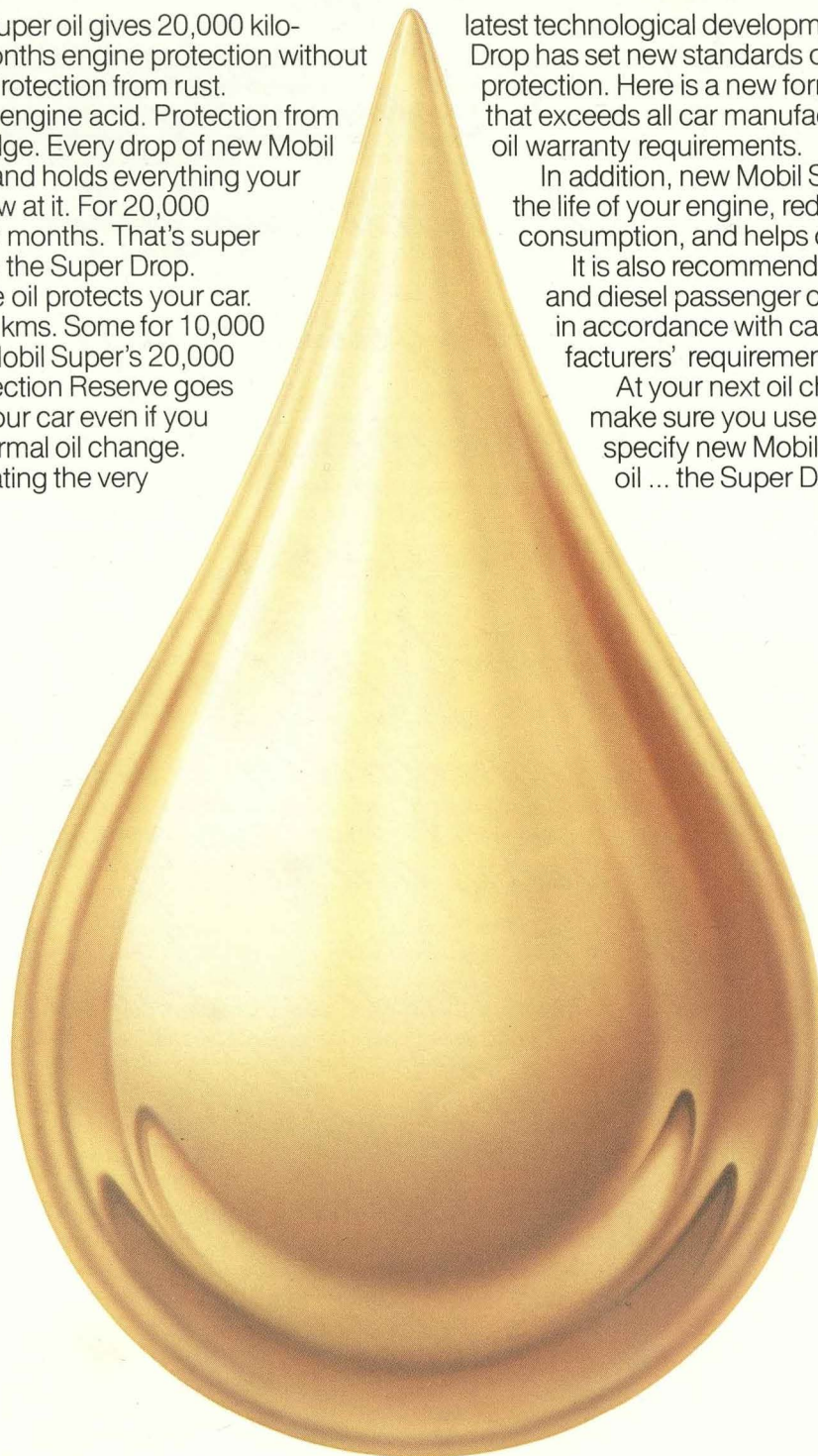
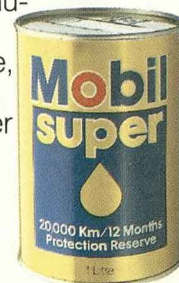
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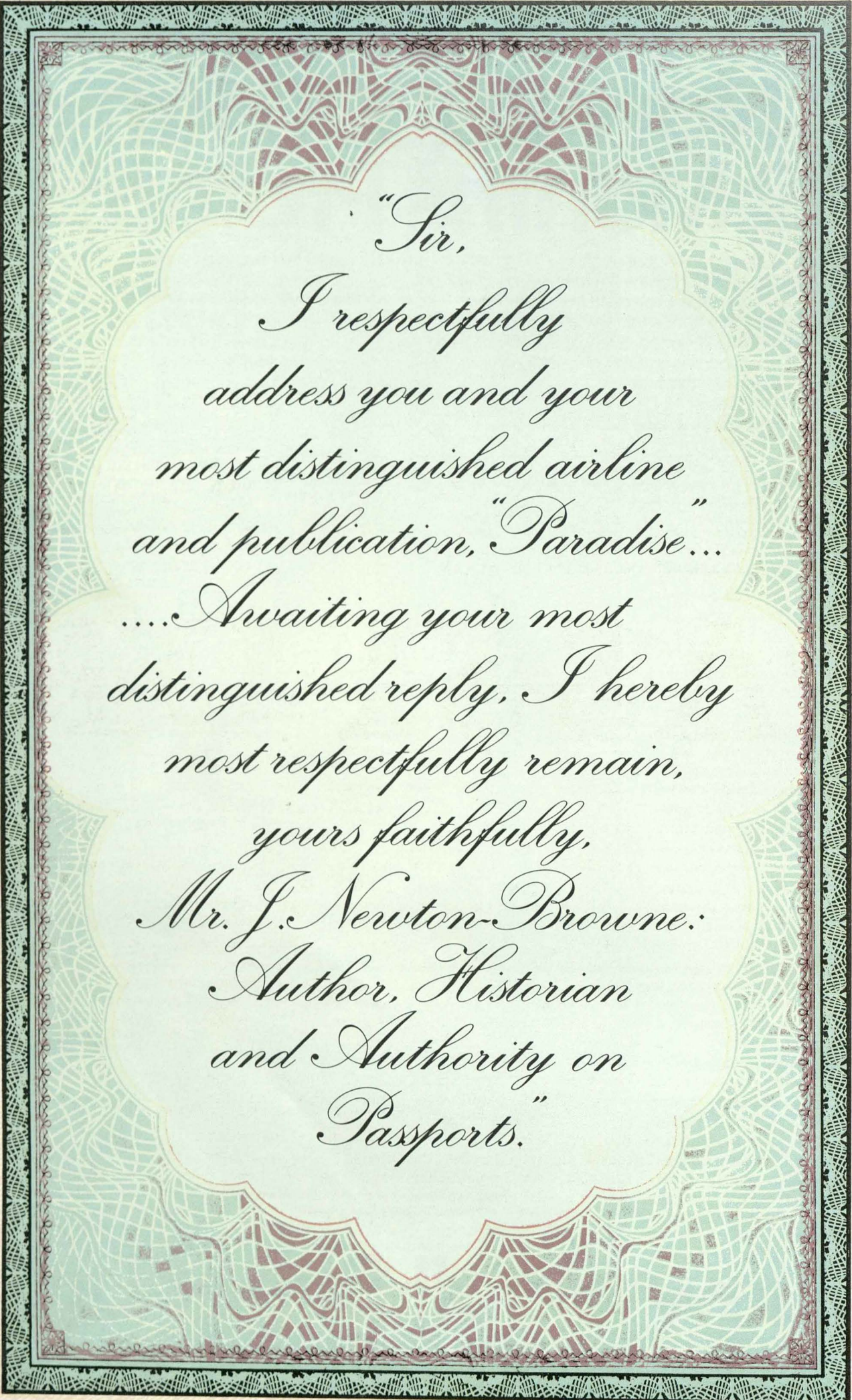
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"Sir,
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....Awaiting your most
distinguished reply, I hereby
most respectfully remain,
yours faithfully,
Mr. J. Newton Browne:
Author, Historian
and Authority on
Passports."

JEWTON-BROWNE. Who was this man who, 'in today's jet age', wanted us to educate the public about 'what a passport really is'? Paradise magazine, quite logically, was a medium he wanted to use. Why not? we thought. But, as intriguing as the story of passports might be — and Mr Newton-Browne assured us that among his collection he had a travel document dating from 1833 — the Dickensian tone of his communication made him, as a personality, even more intriguing. This was one *Paradise* contributor we wanted to see in the flesh.

His epistle — somehow 'let-

apartment, he would shuffle rather than walk; a cobweb of two in the corners?

St Kilda, some say, has a bigger ratio of apartment blocks to houses than any suburb in Melbourne, perhaps Australia. A side door entrance ushered me to stairwell gloom. Flat 2/54 was ground floor.

My knock was answered quite quickly. The shape of the answering image was right — a slight figure, a hint of slope to the shoulders. The voice was right: soft, just a little earnest. The moustache — slightly careless. The dress casual.

But I was introducing myself to a young man who looked to be the 31 years he

an end to that diplomatic foray.)

It was during his law enforcement days that Jim Newton-Browne came to realise, as a result of his investigative work, that he had become an authority on travel documentation. He began delving into the history of passport travel.

'Passports can be traced to the Holy Land more than four centuries before the beginning of Christianity,' he says. 'Around 450BC the King of Persia appointed Nehemiah governor over Palestine. Nehemiah requested and was granted a letter of safe passage for his protection. This was the

word passport certainly derives from two French words, *passer* (meaning to enter or leave) and *port* (port or harbour).

King Henry VIII enacted law under which any of his subjects who robbed or injured a foreigner who had a safe conduct pass was to be brought before the King's Court of Chancery and forced to make restitution. The Privy Council appears to have issued passports from a very early date and certainly was empowered to do so from 1540 to 1683. From 1644 to 1649 both houses of the British parliament were able to grant passports.

Until the days of Charles II,

Mr PASSPORT

By Bob Hawkins

ter' is all-too-mod for Newton-Browne's high-flown phrasology — indicated an inner Melbourne, Australia, address. The Melbourne telephone directory gave no clue. Directory inquiries had nothing to offer either. It seemed this venerable author, historian and authority on passports was too set in his olde worlde ways to tolerate anything as new-fangled and impersonal as a telephone.

For anyone who knows Melbourne, the suburb of St Kilda is a fitting place for the Newton-Browne image we had conjured in Port Moresby: a little old man, maybe pince-nez or monocle; perhaps a little careless of dress; certainly, in the twilight of his shuttered

claimed. The apartment was fresh and tidy. His Finnish wife Kirsti, a dental nurse, was at work and their young son at school.

Quickly the 'J' was established: 'James but I prefer Jim.' Jim Newton-Browne was born in Denver, Colorado, US. He grew up in California. Most of his working life has been in US law enforcement as a marshal with the federal Department of Justice in New England state. For a spell up to November 1975 — as a result, he says, of security work in the days of Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger — he was honorary consul in the US for the Republic of Dahomey. (A coup changing Dahomey to the Peoples Republic of Benin put

first request on record for what we know today as a passport.'

Privileged travellers within the Roman empire carried diplomas and papers which allowed them to use public horses, enjoy certain travel facilities and expect official protection. Royal envoys and foreign ambassadors in the Middle Ages of Europe were given documents. When the Vatican held sway over vast tracts of the Old World, the Pope was the person who issued documents requesting safe conduct for travellers.

Jim Newton-Browne believes that the passport as we know it today has evolved as a result of British policy though some would claim the French have played a greater role. The

all British passports were signed by the monarch, but then a second form of passport was introduced which was issued by the Secretary of State. This system continued until 1794 from which date all British passports have been issued by the Secretary of State.

Passports were issued to people of all nationalities, foreigners in Britain receiving them free while British subjects had to pay a fee. Foreign missions in Britain were issuing passports to British subjects and others to enable them to travel overseas. It was not until 1858 that the system of governments issuing passports only to their own nationals was introduced.

In 1914 a photograph

became necessary for the British passport and other countries soon followed suit. Until the 1920s passports were a single sheet of paper. Then, as a result of a League of Nations-sponsored international conference on passports in Paris in 1920, the idea of a passport which opened like a



and Yugoslavia, for example, issue a *Tire d'Identite et de Voyage* which is normally given to stateless persons. Several countries have what are known as 'protection' or 'friends' passports. These are issued to nationals of countries whose interests are being protected provided the bearer has registered as a national of such a country and his own passport has expired or is otherwise invalid. Switzerland and West Germany are two nations which issue these travel papers.

After the Second World War, German nationals were issued 'temporary travel documents' by the Allied High Commission. From 1945 until 1972 the United States gave 'certificates of identity' to the people of the Ryukyu Islands to the southwest of Japan. The system ended when the Ryukyus were returned to the jurisdiction of Japan.

For United Nations officials there is a travel document called a *laissez-passer* which was established by the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations adopted by the General Assembly in 1946.

Jim Newton-Browne has studied international efforts to cope with an increasing travell-



Clockwise from left: American passport issued in 1833; Australian diplomatic, United Nations Laissez Passer, Tuvalu, old colonial 'British Solomon Islands', Papua New Guinea official and Fiji diplomatic; 1911 American passport and the latest Australian passport modelled on the ICAO design; Mr Passport

ing public, particularly over the past 60 years. There have been many conferences, beginning with the League of Nations conference in 1920.

In 1969 a panel of passport specialists, assembled by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), began a detailed study on international travel. Eight countries were represented on the panel — West Germany, France, India, Kenya, Sweden, Australia, Canada and the United States.

By 1974 it recommended to ICAO that a new international passport system should be introduced. Now ICAO is promoting a passport known as the machine readable passport (MRP). This new document can be a separate card or a book. It contains a series of code numbers and markings similar to an ordinary passport but through them it can be instantly checked by computer. Jim Newton-Browne says it would speed up immigration and customs processing of travellers at major airports.

Australia and the United States now issue a small passport which conforms to the standards recommended to the ICAO in 1974. One wonders why this smaller size was not introduced years ago. Standard size passports, unless you have a handbag to put them in, are difficult to carry permanently on the person — which is advisable for anyone travelling in a foreign country.

Jim Newton-Browne places great stress on the need for travellers to safeguard their travel documents. Loss, theft or destruction should be reported immediately to local police and to representatives of the issuing authority, he says. And don't be tempted to touch up an indistinct entry. 'Alterations of entries or additions in a passport may only be made by authorised officers,' says Jim. 'Any unauthorised alterations will render the passport invalid.'

This month Jim is due to

stage his third exhibition of travel documents — this time in Canberra, his other two exhibitions having been in Melbourne and Sydney.

Encouraged by the United Nations, which has sponsored him in his attempts to build up a collection of cancelled passports, Jim is now hoping that governments in other countries will join him in his drive to cultivate public awareness both of the history of the passport and the need for valid documents to be carefully protected.

Readers might be wondering how a man like Jim Newton-Browne makes a living



if he spends all his time gathering, studying and exhibiting his unusual collection. At the moment, he says, he is not making much out of it. But, as news of his expertise spreads, he says, he is getting an increasing amount of work from the UN and various governments when they need someone who knows the difference between the genuine article and a dud travel document.

In an age when forged documents are on the increase, Jim Newton-Browne may be first in a line of business which could turn into a comfortable living. By the way, Jim does have a telephone. His first exhibition in Melbourne provoked a crank call or two which prompted him to keep a silent number. 📞

book and contained a fixed number of pages was adopted.

The first diplomatic passport appeared during World War One (1914–18). The United States was the first country to issue what have become known as official passports.

Today most countries issue three types of passport — regular to the travelling public; official or special to people travelling on government business; and diplomatic to government officials with diplomatic status.

Countries which issue only one type of passport endorse them for official and diplomatic status. The United Kingdom, Malaysia, Malta and Solomon Islands are among countries with this policy.

Almost all passports have a message from the issuing government, asking that the bearer be allowed to pass freely and to be provided with all lawful aid and protection. The message is usually in the form of a request from the head of state or a representative.

Many countries also issue other types of travel documents. Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Israel, Luxembourg, Norway, Britain

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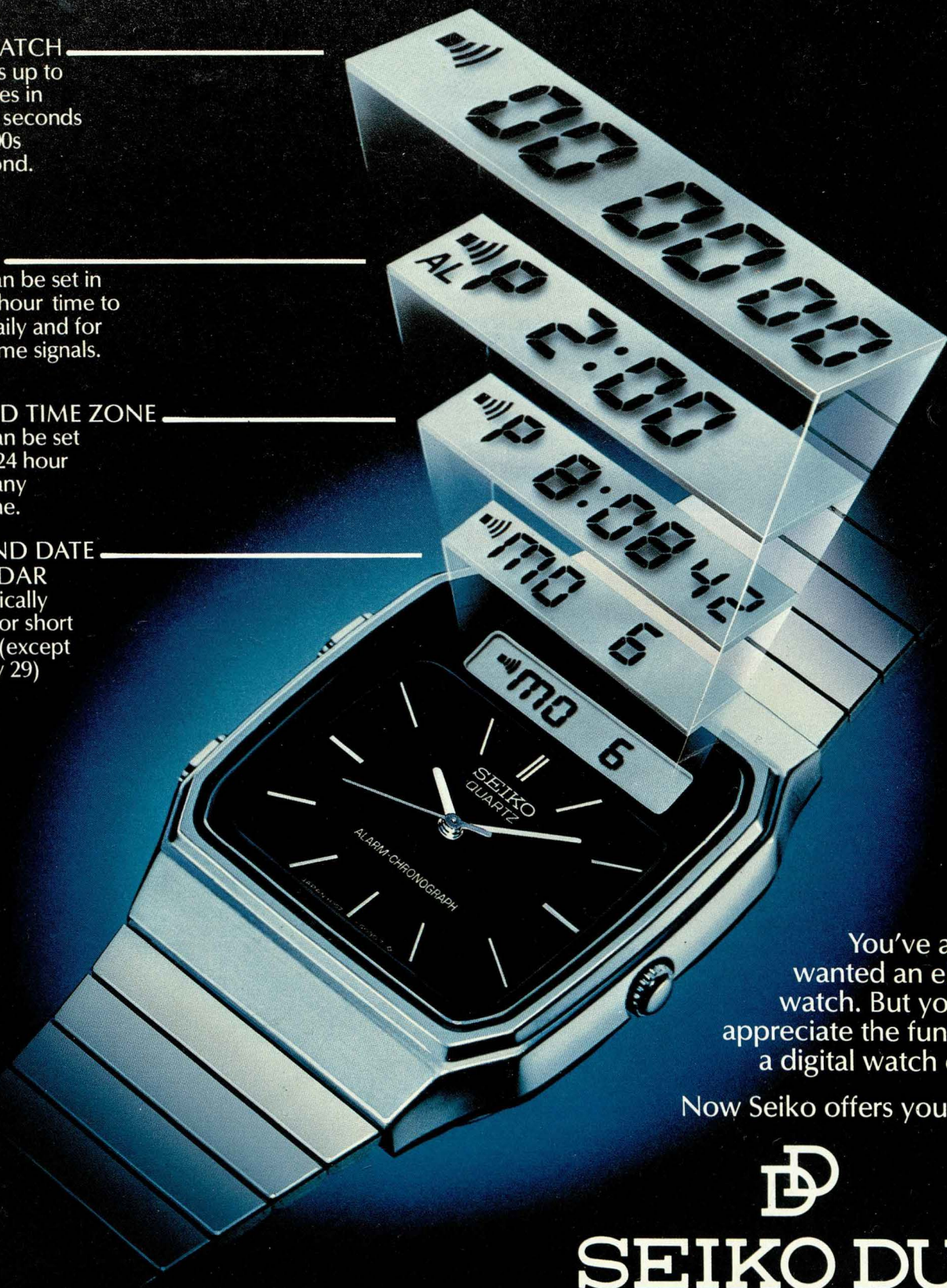
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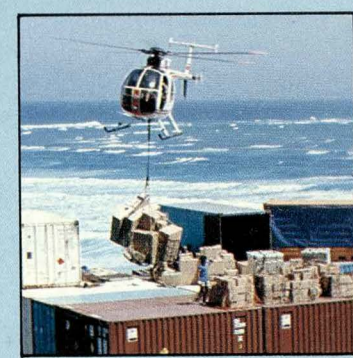
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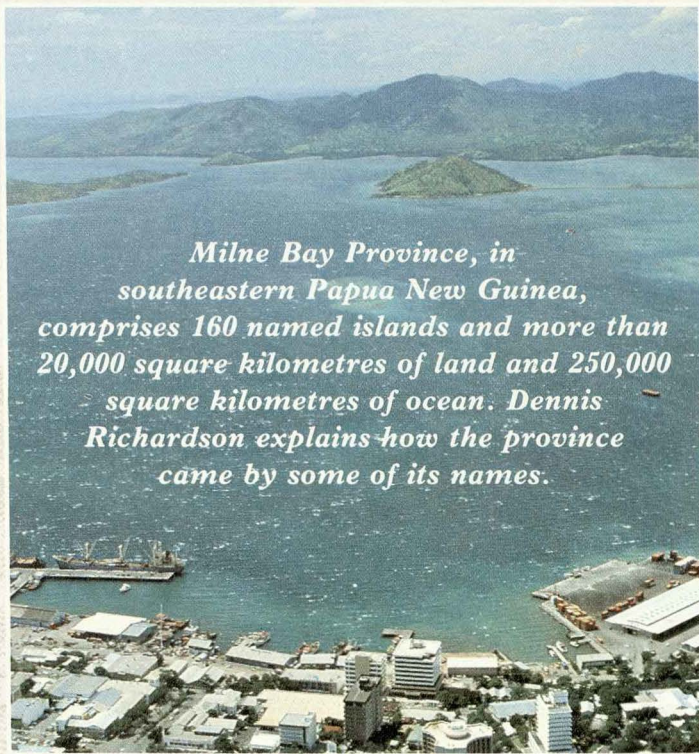


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Milne Bay Province, in southeastern Papua New Guinea, comprises 160 named islands and more than 20,000 square kilometres of land and 250,000 square kilometres of ocean. Dennis Richardson explains how the province came by some of its names.

Tom Cooke

THERE was an Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotsman ... for that matter several of each plus a variety of French, Dutch and Spanish not to mention Belgians, Australians and Melanesians ... all of whose names live on in the islands of Milne Bay Province, itself named in 1873 after the British Sea Lord of the day.

Time has lent an aura of romance to the idea of graceful sailing vessels picking their way through reefs, the masters loftily handing out names to port and starboard.

Historian J.C. Beaglehole suggests a different picture. He describes those adventuring vessels as 'the last remnants of a worm-eaten navy ... manned from the dregs of piracy, prison and dockyard inn', their crews subsisting on an 'ever-

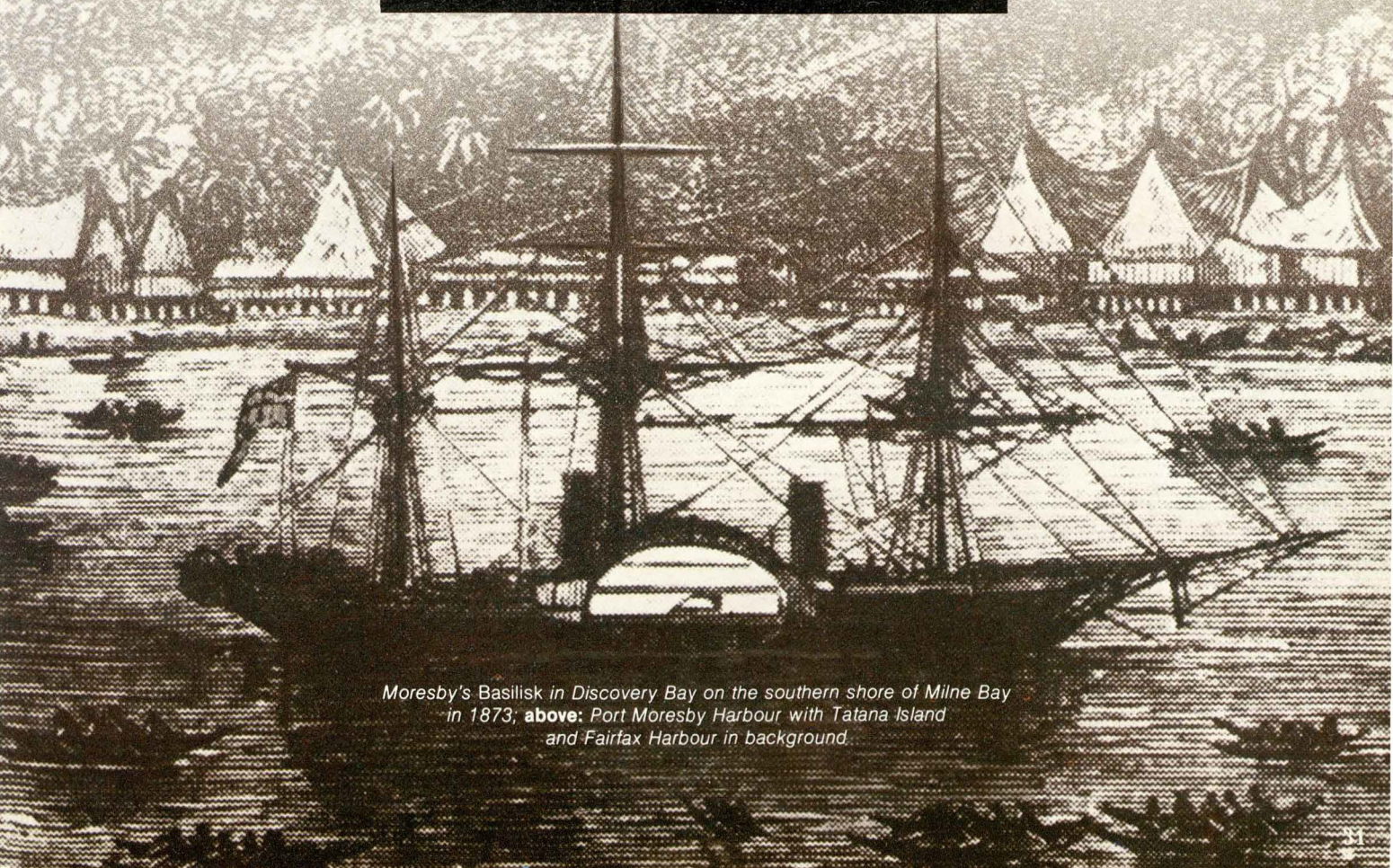
lasting diet of salt meat and decaying biscuit'.

They were tiny by today's standards, mostly ranging from 50 to 500 tons. They were insanitary and overcrowded. Even the *Basilisk*, with 178 officers and men, was described by its captain, John Moresby, as an 'old-fashioned paddler of 1071 tons ...

One of the most prolific of name-droppers (with plenty to drop) was *Centre-Amiral* Raymond Joseph de Bruni D'Entrecasteaux who was sent from France in 1791 to search for the expedition led by La Perouse which went missing in 1788.

D'Entrecasteaux failed in his quest, perhaps because he was too busy naming islands. In the space of a month (June 1793) he sighted and named Renard, St Aignan (now Mi-

THE NAME DROPPERS



Moresby's Basilisk in Discovery Bay on the southern shore of Milne Bay in 1873; above: Port Moresby Harbour with Tatana Island and Fairfax Harbour in background.

simas), Deboyne, Trobriand, Lusancay — the last three after members of his expedition — and an imposing group of three large islands after himself. He also named Rossel, Papua New Guinea's most southeasterly island, which had been sighted earlier by Bougainville, and possibly by Torres in 1606.

John Moresby was also a visitor to Milne Bay waters. The son of an English admiral, Moresby was in service under the command of Nelson at the age of 13. A varied career followed. He fought Indians in Canada, Russians in the Crimea and Chinese in the Opium Wars. He was on half pay for seven years before being given command of HMS *Basilisk* on Australian duty.

In 1873 Moresby exceeded his brief by sailing southeast of Port Moresby and surveying and naming Milne Bay, Basilisk (now Basilaki), Hayter, Bentley, Sullivan, Killerton and Owen Stanley Islands — all after seamen. On Hayter Island on April 24, 1873, he formally claimed possession of his 'discoveries' on behalf of Queen Victoria, celebrating

with a *feu de joie* and a rum issue.

His action was not appreciated in London and it was not until 1884, after Germany had laid claim to the north-eastern portion of the island of New Guinea, that the south-eastern portion was formally claimed by Britain.

Moresby also re-named the three islands of the D'Entrecasteaux group — Goodenough after his superior, the commodore of the Australian station, Normanby after the governor of Queensland (and later New Zealand and Victoria), and Fergusson after another governor of New Zealand.

When he got home Moresby wrote *Discoveries and Surveys in New Guinea and the D'Entrecasteaux Islands* but later displayed a change of mind about his finds. He wrote in 1885: 'I remember feeling sad at heart that we should bring to these people such a fate as civilisation and the Christianity such as too often accompanied it.'

People of Tatana Island (between Port Moresby and Fair-



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fax Harbours and now joined to the mainland by a causeway) later recalled that when Moresby offered them rice, tinned meat and biscuits, they thought the rice was insect larvae, the tinned meat human flesh and the biscuits the ears of bad spirits.

Other seamen whose names are still on the Milne Bay map include Collingwood (after the admiral who assumed command of the *Victory* on the death of Nelson at Trafalgar), Laughlin (captain of the ill-fated *Mary*), D'Urville, Duperre, Yule (one of Owen Stanley's officers), and Hunter

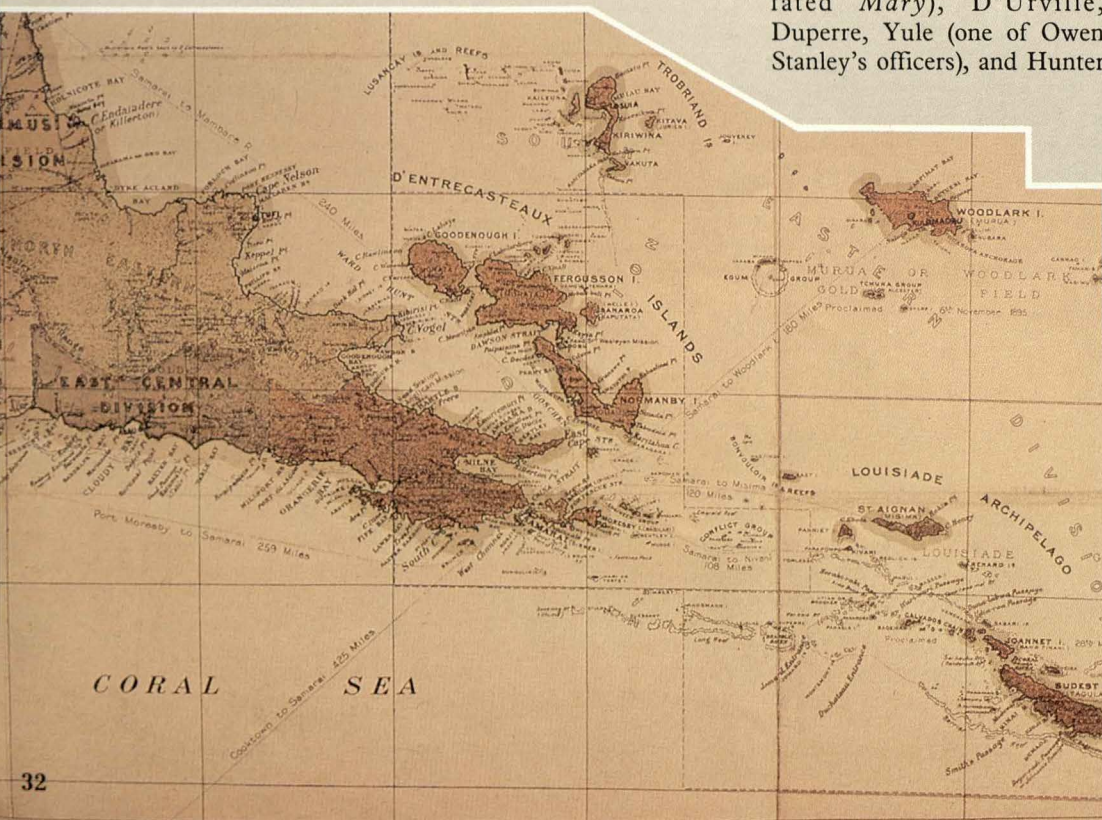
(commander of the *Marshall Bennett*).

To me, the most intriguing of nineteenth century voyagers in the Pacific was the unromantically-named Captain Grimes of Sydney who, in 1832, gave the lovely name of his vessel, *Woodlark*, to an island way out in the Solomon Sea, far from the haunts of its avian namesake.

It was as if Grimes had an insight to the island's future. In 1847 the first missionaries to Papua landed on Woodlark Island. One of them, Brother Optat, instead of converting the islanders was himself converted — to the enjoyment of 'improper familiarities — in the sight of all'. There was a gold rush to Woodlark which led to the first union-organised strike in Papua New Guinea (in 1901) as well as to the mining of more than 200,000 ounces of gold. And, during the Pacific War, there was an unannounced landing of the 112th US Cavalry Corps and the construction, in 24 days, of an airstrip which is still occasionally used.

In so many ways, island-studded Milne Bay Province radiates the essence of all that dreamers conjure of the Pacific. Because they are remote from the national capital, because access to many places is possible only by boat or float-plane, the islands people of Milne Bay Province have been able to better control the mixing of ancient with modern. Oddly, since independence in 1975, there is little suggestion that names inflicted by foreigners should give way to names from the times before. — Dennis Richardson is professor in charge of the Department of Forestry at the University of Technology, Lae.

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HIGHWAYS TO THE SKY

Some say Papua New Guinea has more airstrips for its size than any other nation. If that's true, it's not really surprising. A terrain so craggy, river-veined and swampy, can never be adequately served by land roads. So communications policy has relied heavily on 'highways to the sky'. Joan Rule writes about the airstrips built where even the roughest of dirt roads can't go.

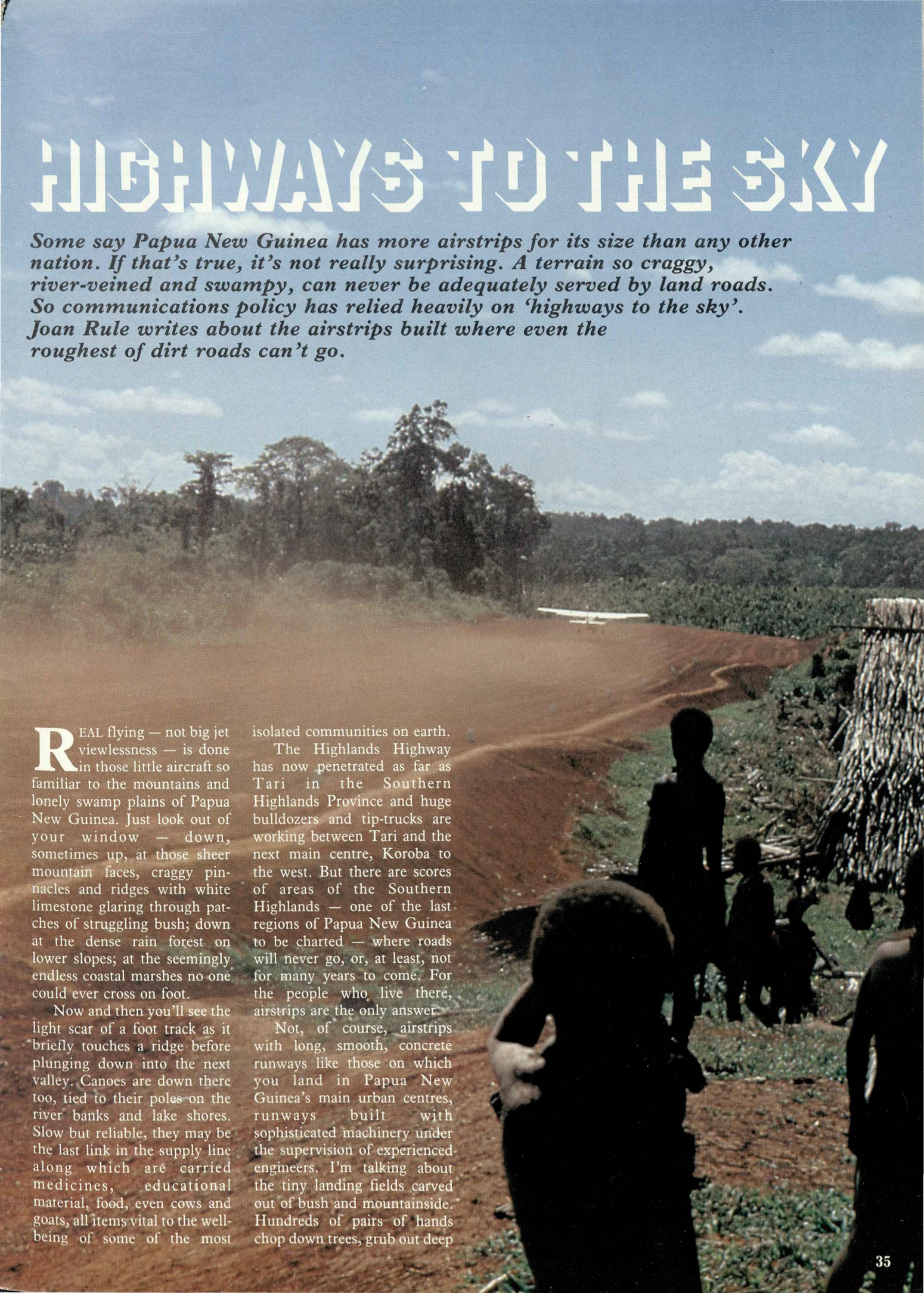
REAL flying — not big jet viewlessness — is done in those little aircraft so familiar to the mountains and lonely swamp plains of Papua New Guinea. Just look out of your window — down, sometimes up, at those sheer mountain faces, craggy pinnacles and ridges with white limestone glaring through patches of struggling bush; down at the dense rain forest on lower slopes; at the seemingly endless coastal marshes no one could ever cross on foot.

Now and then you'll see the light scar of a foot track as it briefly touches a ridge before plunging down into the next valley. Canoes are down there too, tied to their poles on the river banks and lake shores. Slow but reliable, they may be the last link in the supply line along which are carried medicines, educational material, food, even cows and goats, all items vital to the well-being of some of the most

isolated communities on earth.

The Highlands Highway has now penetrated as far as Tari in the Southern Highlands Province and huge bulldozers and tip-trucks are working between Tari and the next main centre, Koroba to the west. But there are scores of areas of the Southern Highlands — one of the last regions of Papua New Guinea to be charted — where roads will never go, or, at least, not for many years to come. For the people who live there, airstrips are the only answer.

Not, of course, airstrips with long, smooth, concrete runways like those on which you land in Papua New Guinea's main urban centres, runways built with sophisticated machinery under the supervision of experienced engineers. I'm talking about the tiny landing fields carved out of bush and mountainside. Hundreds of pairs of hands chop down trees, grub out deep





root systems, fill in gaping holes, dig away hills — all this work done with axes, spades and wheelbarrows, the latter sometimes supplemented with 'stretcher' carriers made from flour sacks on two long poles.

The surfaces are grassed wherever possible to defy erosion. This means regular cutting — by motor mowers or switching grass knives. The length of a strip often is no more than the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) absolute minimum of 500 metres.

Airstrips in Papua New Guinea are not all flat. Some have been built over humps, around corners, on cliff edges, in windy one-way-only valleys. Some years ago, flying to a remote spot in the Star Mountains, I said, innocently, to the pilot as we turned into a nar-

row gorge: 'What's that bit of crooked road doing on the mountain side?' 'That's the airstrip,' he grinned. 'People pray when they land there.'

When an airstrip is needed in terrain like that, the missions usually ask a pilot to go in on foot to look at possible sites. If that's not feasible, he takes a look from the air. Before a pilot is asked to make his inspection, sites have been paced out, then measured several times to ensure they meet minimum length requirements. The width also is carefully measured. Often consideration has to be given to whether that enormous hollow halfway along a proposed strip can be filled before willing workers' enthusiasm flags. And is that hill too close to the end of the runway? And, if it's a one-way



Many hands . . . and still it's hard going carving out a Highlands airstrip. Sometimes a tractor, assembled on site, is available to help, but usually it's all done by picks, shovels, axes and wheelbarrows — and much sweat of the brow



strip, will the prevailing wind be with or against a pilot on take-off? (Taking off with the wind behind a plane is more hazardous and greatly reduces loadings.)

These are the type of considerations that have to be given before a pilot is asked if he would be prepared ever to land on the spot where the strip is planned.

Often a pilot has to walk a day or longer over rugged mountain tracks to reach a planned airstrip site. But his expert opinion can save months of wasted labour. The real dilemma comes when his decision is 'marginal'. That's when the people of a community have to decide whether to risk months of back-breaking work and then get a knock-back by the CAA. Occasionally you

can see where land has been cleared for a runway and then the project abandoned.

The missionary, trying to establish a station in a new area, often will give priority to the establishment of an airstrip simply because it is the only way in which speedy access to the outside world can be maintained.

The station at Mount Bosavi is an example. The strip builder and a linguist, my husband, walked for 11 days in 1965 from Lake Kutubu. Their carrier line hefted tools, food and equipment across inhospitable country including a risky crossing on a cane bridge of the roaring Kikori River.

On arrival at the chosen site there was no problem signing on local labour. The heavily-wooded site near the extinct

volcano was rapidly cleared. Drops of food and fuel were made by Missionary Aviation Fellowship planes. Four-and-a-half months after the felling of the first trees, a plane landed at Mount Bosavi. Just before the first landing my husband walked back to Lake Kutubu. In 4½ days he covered a distance it took a light plane 15 minutes to fly.

Maintaining a good sense of humour while in the throes of airstrip building is essential. At Honinabi in the northeast of Western Province in 1962, the missionary from Lake Murray who was building the strip had arranged to walk to Nomad Patrol Post to pick up the MAF pilot who was to comment on the chosen site. But heavy rains made it essential for the missionary to stay at the

site and it was pointless for the pilot to come. The radio transceiver, however, was not working. So, how to let the pilot know? When the pilot flew over the site he saw laid out in large letters, made with white flour, 'NEH 6:3'. Knowing his Bible and having one in the plane, the pilot checked Nehemiah Chapter 6, Verse 3: 'I am doing great work and cannot come down.' Message received and understood.

In the Biami area of Western Province, where government patrols several times had been greeted with arrows, an outpost was set up some distance from the Nomad airstrip. After establishing friendly relations with the local people, the missionary built a small house for his wife and family in the centre of the



The back-breaking is over. Today is the time for celebration. Tomorrow will start the routine of maintaining supplies

Biami area at Mougulu. He decided to bring in equipment and get an airstrip built as quickly as possible.

He and his wife had met in Queensland through the Junior Farmers organisation. Both were from the land and they set up a programme for their tractor which had been brought in in four sections. They worked alternatively, non-stop, day and night, to complete the strip. Even so, it took a year to complete. On the day of the opening the Biami people expressed their satisfaction at the completion of the project. Last year that airstrip was in the news by making speedy intervention possible when tribal fighting broke out.

Sometimes when a missionary could not be on the job all the time, the local people simply got on with an airstrip with just an occasional visit by the missionary to give advice. The one built at Benaria,

southeast of Tari, by the Hulia people and opened in 1966, is a good example.

On the actual day a strip is opened, the pilot, who has if possible inspected the finished strip at ground level, flies over and examines it again from low altitude. If all is well, he makes a solo landing once dogs, pigs and runaway children have been cleared by harassed owners amidst much shouting. Spectators dress in traditional finery to mark such momentous events and usually stage a feast to celebrate.

After the big day, however, the pilot must be able to return to the airstrip to bring foodstuffs, medical supplies and building materials or to evacuate a patient. Sometimes he is flat out finding it again because, especially in bad visibility, it appears as no more than a small green oblong dot in hundreds of square kilometres of dense jungle.

A number of times I've been in an aircraft and the pilot has had us craning our necks to study the jungle in all direc-

tions until, at last, someone says: 'There it is.'

Once, in the very early days of flying in the Southern Highlands, a pilot was making his second flight to the new mission strip at Rumginae, close to the West Irian border. When he arrived at the right bend in the river (the Ok Mart) he discovered the airstrip had 'gone'. He felt like calling CAA to say someone had taken it away. Instead he simply radioed to say he could not locate it. He was given permission to return to Lake Murray which he reached just before last light.

Next day, studying his maps, and considering the allowance he had made for the strong wind, he realised he might have actually been flying in West Irian where another river, just west of the Ok Mart, has an identical bend at the same altitude.

Between 1958 and 1979, in the remote areas of the Western and Southern Highlands Provinces, the Asia Pacific Christian Mission

(APCM) has built nearly 30 airstrips, the control of which is now being handed over to the Evangelical Church of Papua (ECP), the church into which the APCM is being integrated.

The ECP is now celebrating its 50th birthday in Papua New Guinea and speakers, retired missionaries making sentimental journeys, and other guests are being flown by single engine aircraft to all of these small airstrips — the air roads of the inland, the people's link with the outside world. — *Joan Rule is a lecturer at the Dauli Teachers College near Tari.* ♣



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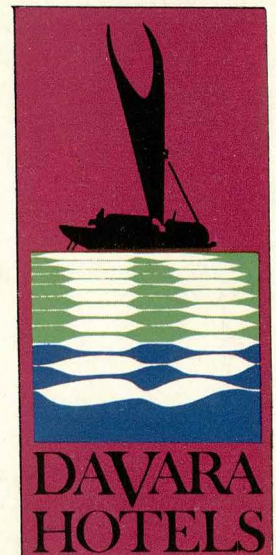
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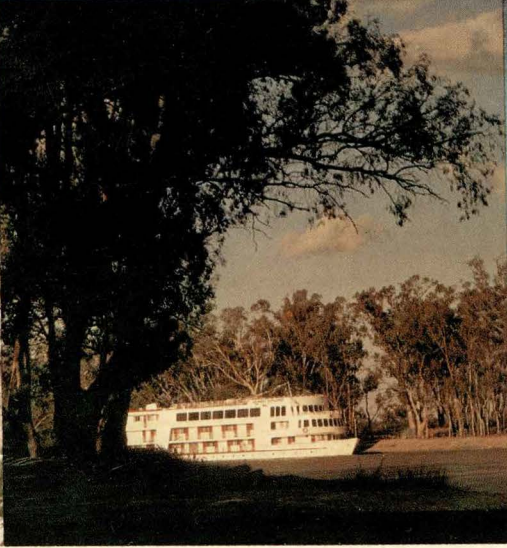
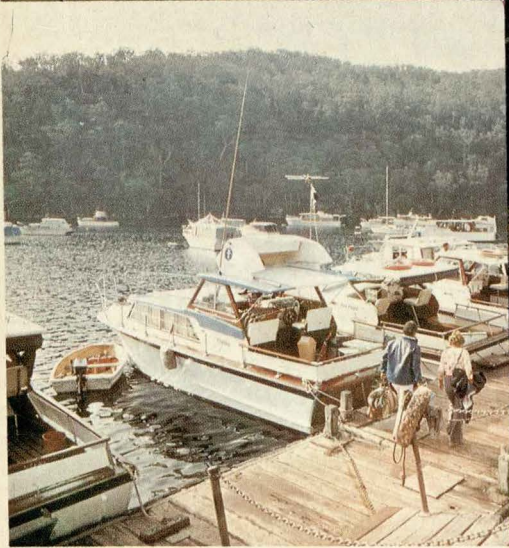
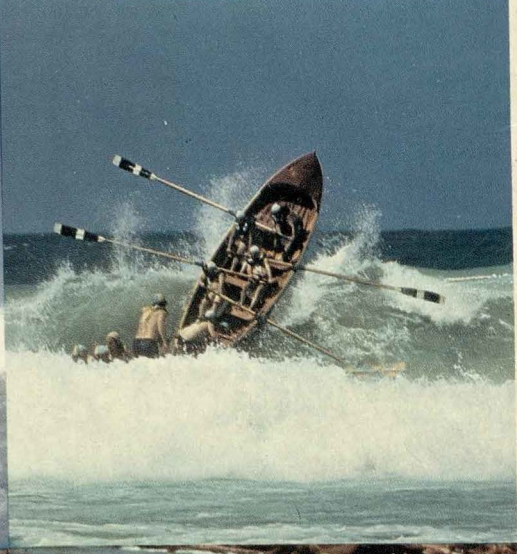
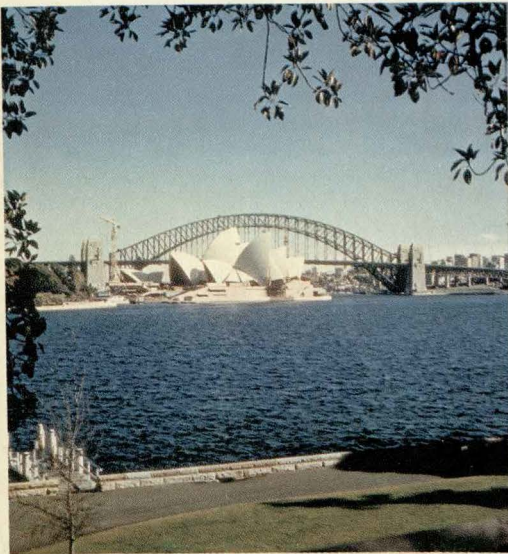
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